

STATE OF MAINE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Docket No. 2003-334

July 1, 2003

Paul D. Berube, et al,
Request for Commission Investigation Into
Changing the Town of Bowdoinham's Exchange
Code From 666 to 616

ORDER

Welch, Chairman; Nugent and Diamond, Commissioners

I. SUMMARY

We dismiss this complaint as without merit and deny the petition.

II. BACKGROUND

On May 5, 2003, the Commission received a petition from Paul D. Berube and ten other signatories (Petitioners). While the details of the request were somewhat unclear, we considered it a complaint under 35-A M.R.S.A. §1302 since eleven people signed it. The petition stated, in total:

Residents of the Town of Bowdoinham, who have signed below, petition the State of Maine Public Utilities Commission, 242 State Street. 18 State House Station, August Maine 04333, to request that the Commission change the Town's current phone exchange from 666 to 616.

The document contained no further explanation or background on the request. Pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. §1302 (2), Verizon-Maine was notified of the complaint and ordered to respond.

On June 2, 2003, Verizon filed its response to the petition. Verizon stated that it does not control the use or assignment of NXX codes (also known as telephone exchange numbers) in Maine; that authority rests with the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA). Under current industry code conservation guidelines, Verizon cannot request additional telephone numbers for use in Bowdoinham until its present assignment of numbers is 75% utilized and Verizon has less than a six-month supply of numbers to exhaust. Presently, Verizon's Bowdoinham numbers are 63% utilized and Verizon estimates it will take more than six years to number exhaust. Moreover, because 666 is a "pooled" NXX block, NANPA ordinarily would not open a "new" NXX code for Bowdoinham (either "616" or any other code) until all available thousand number blocks within the pooled 666 block have been assigned and utilized.

Thus, a request by Verizon to NANPA for additional numbers in Bowdoinham would simply net Verizon additional "666" telephone numbers from available thousand blocks within the pooled block.

Verizon also refers to the cost and the inconvenience, to both carriers and customers, of converting all Bowdoinham lines from 666 to 616. Extensive service order activity and switch translation work would be required on Verizon's part and all subscribers would incur the cost and inconvenience of a telephone number change. Verizon stated that business customers in particular are likely to strongly oppose a change in Bowdoinham telephone numbers due to the cost of stationery, business cards, signage, advertisements, and loss of goodwill.¹

III. DECISION

We find no basis on the record to grant the request. First, the petitioners did not provide any background or reason for the requested change in numbers. As Verizon noted in its comments, this NXX has been assigned to Bowdoinham for many years.

We also find that our policies relating to number conservation would not support granting this petition or others like it. Since 1998, we have made preservation of the 207 area code a policy priority.² We worked hard to have number conservation measures enacted at the federal level and have strictly enforced these measures on the state level. Avoiding a new area code means that Maine consumers will not be subjected to the inconvenience and costs associated with changing a phone number. As Verizon pointed out in its comments, these inconveniences and costs are particularly difficult for small businesses who must reprint stationary and change advertising materials. If we were to grant the Petitioners request, we would be subjecting the people of Bowdoinham to these inconveniences without providing any documented benefit to them.

Thus, we find no further investigation is warranted in this matter and

O R D E R

1. That the complaint is dismissed as without merit.
2. That a copy of this Order be mailed to interested parties and this Docket be closed.

¹According to Verizon's most recent annual report, the number of lines in the Bowdoinham exchange is 1,805 (1,637 residential and 168 business).

²See Docket No. 98-634, Orders dated August 25, 1998 and November 4, 1999.

Dated at Augusta, Maine, this 1st day of July, 2003.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Dennis L. Keschl
Administrative Director

COMMISSIONERS VOTING FOR: Welch
 Diamond

COMMISSIONER ABSENT: Nugent

NOTICE OF RIGHTS TO REVIEW OR APPEAL

5 M.R.S.A. § 9061 requires the Public Utilities Commission to give each party to an adjudicatory proceeding written notice of the party's rights to review or appeal of its decision made at the conclusion of the adjudicatory proceeding. The methods of review or appeal of PUC decisions at the conclusion of an adjudicatory proceeding are as follows:

1. Reconsideration of the Commission's Order may be requested under Section 1004 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (65-407 C.M.R.110) within 20 days of the date of the Order by filing a petition with the Commission stating the grounds upon which reconsideration is sought.
2. Appeal of a final decision of the Commission may be taken to the Law Court by filing, within 21 days of the date of the Order, a Notice of Appeal with the Administrative Director of the Commission, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1320(1)-(4) and the Maine Rules of Appellate Procedure.
3. Additional court review of constitutional issues or issues involving the justness or reasonableness of rates may be had by the filing of an appeal with the Law Court, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1320(5).

Note: The attachment of this Notice to a document does not indicate the Commission's view that the particular document may be subject to review or appeal. Similarly, the failure of the Commission to attach a copy of this Notice to a document does not indicate the Commission's view that the document is not subject to review or appeal.